

1263201

Registered provider: Pathway Care Solutions II Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is a privately run children's home. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to four children who have emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Inspection dates: 6 to 7 February 2018

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **good**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements of good.

Date of last inspection: first inspection

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Key findings from this inspection

This children's home is good because:

- Safeguarding practices, risk management and the care provided to the children are good and personalised. This is because the manager and staff clearly know the children well.
- The children have made measureable progress since their admission to the home and relative to their starting points due to the efforts made by staff to

understand and manage their behaviours.

- Regular consultation takes place with the children. Their wishes and feelings are given meaningful consideration. Children are supported to participate in the care planning process and attend their statutory reviews. This brings about positive changes to plans for their future and promotes opportunities.
- High staff ratios ensure that children are well protected and risky behaviours are managed effectively. Their safety and well-being are prioritised. Risk assessments evidence well the strategies that are in place to manage behaviours associated with children who go into crisis or who may go missing from care.
- Children are well supported in their education. Attendance at specialist appointments and contact with children's families are promoted and supervised effectively. The home conveys a homely, family-orientated environment that encourages planned visits from immediate and extended family members.
- The registered manager is highly experienced and supported by a dedicated and resilient staff team that provides the children with continuity and consistent care. Staff receive regular supervision and are provided with a wealth of training opportunities to enhance their professional development.

The Children's home's areas for development:

- The registered manager needs to ensure that all serious events or incidents are notified to Ofsted, underpinned by the recording of such incidents in sufficient detail.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
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This is the home's first inspection		
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What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Recommendations

- Regulation 40(4) requires the registered person to notify Ofsted and other relevant persons if one of the situations specified in regulation 40(4)(a)-(d) occurs, or if there is an incident relating to the protection, safeguarding or welfare of a child living in the home which the registered person considers to be serious (40(4)(e)).

The registered person should have a system in place so that all serious events are notified, within 24 hours, to the appropriate people. The system should cover the action that should be followed if the event arises at the weekend or on a public holiday. Notification must include details of the action taken by the home's staff in response to the event. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards' page 63, paragraph 14.10 & 14.13)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

This is the home's first inspection since registration. Children living at the home are making steady progress relative to their time in placement and in relation to their starting points. The registered manager is highly experienced. She has appointed a staff team with a range of knowledge and skills. They have created an atmosphere where the children feel safe, listened to and encouraged to make positive choices. One of the children said: 'I feel safe and staff have helped me sort out my feelings. I love living here and I now have a better relationship with my mother.'

A key strength of the home is the positive relationships that have been developed and nurtured with parents. Parents are consulted and feel involved in the day-to-day care of their children, supporting the staff in giving consistent messages. As a result, for one child, her first experience of living in a children's home has been less traumatic, her behaviour is much improved, and she is settled in placement. Family contact is promoted with staff supervising contact both in the home and in the community. One parent in giving feedback said: 'The visit has gone very well; staff were very welcoming and I was given privacy and space to enjoy quality time with my daughter, thank you.' For another child, staff have enabled the whole family to continue attending church every Sunday.

The children enjoy a range of activities tailored to their individual interests and talents. The efforts by staff to replicate and provide continuity in the child's hobbies and outdoor pursuits has really promoted their sense of belonging and self-confidence. Good staffing ratios ensure that the children continue to enjoy their chosen activities at the home and in the community. One child has been given the loan of a horse and is learning how to ride. With much enthusiasm and support from her key worker, she is undertaking all the tasks involved in caring for the horse. In conversation, she said with excitement: 'I love going to the stables and being around the horses, I don't mind mucking out and I'm

soon going to learn to ride. I could go there every day!’ Another child’s talent for singing and dancing is being promoted and she attends a local performing arts academy.

One child is attending mainstream education. Despite the challenges this presents, staff and the school work as a team. Regular exchanges of communication, underpinned by effective behaviour management strategies, have ensured that the child continues to attend regularly and make progress. Staff have worked in collaboration with the placing authority and the headteacher of the virtual school to ensure that for one child, a suitable educational provision has been identified without delay. Staff have been proactive in sourcing educational materials in the interim and facilitated home study utilising resources in the local community. A social worker commented: ‘Staff are very supportive and proactive. Staff are good advocates, very calm and promote [name’s] ethnicity, cultural and religious needs.’

How well children and young people are helped and protected: good

Children have the opportunity to build trusted and secure relationships with adults who are looking after them. In a relatively short period of time, staff have got to know the children well. They understand their complex needs and offer a high level of care that protects and promotes their welfare. Staff have implemented a systematic approach to one child’s bedtime routine that has significantly reduced the onset of negative behaviours that would have previously resulted in sleep deprivation and on occasions, physical restraint. A social worker enthused: ‘Staff are adept at de-escalating situations and [Name] is having very positive experiences. I can’t praise them enough, they have done a magnificent job in managing her care. The strategies they have put in place in settling [Name] at night have been successful and she is invariably asleep by 9.30pm.’

There has been one episode when the children have been missing from care and vulnerable to child sexual exploitation. Staff demonstrated a vigilant, well-coordinated and proactive response to this, with clear strategies to protect and reduce such incidences of harm in the future. For example, staff routinely searched for the children when they went missing. Return home interviews provided staff with useful insight into why the children went missing and the events that took place. The manager took immediate steps to escalate concerns with the placing authorities and the police. This has resulted in effective multi-agency action to safeguard children.

Care planning documents and risk assessments are regularly reviewed and updated. Children are consulted and their plans are child-focused, where the goals and targets for each young person are clearly individualised and achievable. Children can clearly see how positive changes in their behaviour impact on their safety and well-being. Physical intervention is being used appropriately. All incidents are thoroughly recorded, reviewed and monitored in accordance with the legislative framework. Direct work with children and the use of restorative practices have seen some reduction in the use of physical intervention. As one member of staff commented: ‘I have been successful in using distraction techniques to divert negative behaviours. For example, [Name] you cannot give her eye contact; I just link her arm and steer her away from situations. It works sometimes.’ In addition, the social worker said: ‘Staff are doing the best they can in

managing [Name's] complex, unpredictable and volatile behaviour. [Name] has a high level of need and staff are doing their best and have acted on all concerns. They have attended all meetings and share information.'

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager is suitably qualified and experienced and has high aspirations for the children in her care. The manager has a wealth of experience in setting up and managing new homes. She has appointed a staff team whose members bring with them a range of skills and experience, and developed policies and procedures that underpin safe caring practice.

The manager's hands-on approach and clear understanding of what works well demonstrates a strong commitment to improving the quality of care and outcomes for young people. She invests quality time with the children, getting to know their likes and dislikes to ensure that their needs are being met. A representative from a local school said that the manager was 'absolutely brilliant and always makes herself available'.

Staff receive regular monthly supervision and new staff complete a thorough induction. The deputy manager plays a key role in vetting new staff and good practice is strengthened by the implementation of safe recruitment practices. Regular monthly team meetings take place and on occasions the children have participated. This contributes well to the range of consultation processes that are in place. The ethos of the home is clearly on display and states: 'We may all be different fish, but in this house we swim together. So no matter how you say it.. you are all welcome.'

Children benefit from meaningful discussions with staff. Key-working sessions focus on the 'here and now', resulting in issues not getting forgotten. Examples of topics discussed include sexual health, age of consent, keeping safe and emotional well-being. This has been particularly prevalent following the missing from care episode.

The manager has worked hard to provide appropriate support to staff. Staff report an environment where teamwork and peer support are an integral part of the job. In conversation, the deputy manager said: 'Developing emotional resilience within the staff team has been one of the most important strategies in managing the complex behaviours of [Name]. The staff team have been amazing and our motto is "each day is a new beginning".'

The manager's monitoring and quality assurance processes are robust. Audits undertaken are utilised to inform shortfalls in practice and areas of continuing development. Stakeholder feedback, and consultation with families and children, informs well the quality of care. Notifications to Ofsted are not of sufficiently good quality or timely. The manager is taking action to address this. However, a recommendation has been made relating to this.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

Using the 'Social care common inspection framework', this inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, and to consider how well it complies with the Children's homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 1263201

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Pathway Care Solutions II Ltd

Registered provider address: 1 Merchants Place, River Street, Bolton BL2 1BX

Responsible individual: Peter Vallelly

Registered manager: Veronica Beckwith

Inspector

Cath Sikakana, social care inspector

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